



**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

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**Opening Statement of the Honorable David Dreier**  
**House Republican Policy Committee**  
**Border Security and Immigration Reform**

Mr. Chairman, distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for convening this meeting of the Policy Committee to discuss immigration reform. I would also like to welcome and thank all the Committee Chairs who are with us today. We look forward to hearing your testimony on the important issues discussed and vetted at each of your August-recess field hearings on border security and immigration reform.

Let me just say that border security is national security. Last year, House Republicans made a bold move by approving H.R. 4437, the Border Protection, Antiterrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act, to strengthen our borders, reform our outdated immigration laws and crack down illegal immigration. However, the Senate chose to take a different path by approving the Reid-Kennedy immigration reform bill, which includes several troubling provisions. For example, the bill would create a cumbersome and unworkable amnesty program, allowing certain illegal immigrants to jump to the front of the line, ahead of those waiting to enter legally. This provision closely mirrors the amnesty program of the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act, which I opposed. As we all know, that law failed to live up to its intended promises, and I believe that we should not repeat the same mistakes. The Reid-Kennedy bill would also allow illegal immigrants to receive Social Security benefits for their illegal work. In addition, the measure would weaken efforts to keep illegal immigrants, drug traffickers and terrorists out of our country by requiring the U.S. government to confer with the Mexican government before construction of a border fence. Also, the Reid-Kennedy bill would guarantee wages to some temporary foreign workers that could be higher than those paid to American workers at the same worksite.

Mr. Chairman, it is clear that the vast majority of Americans want us to take swift action to enhance border protection and stop illegal immigration. In light of the current impasse that we face over the Reid-Kennedy amnesty bill, House Republicans are determined to deliver real border security solutions for the American people. Our goals are to increase Border Patrol manpower, strengthen border protection with additional fencing and surveillance, provide stricter

enforcement of our immigration laws and enhance cooperation between federal immigration officials and local law enforcement authorities. In particular, I would like to voice my strong support of a few proposals which enjoy broad bipartisan support. Specifically, a provision in last December's border security bill, which I co-authored with my friend from San Diego, Chairman Duncan Hunter, to construct fences at five specific border zones where deaths are common, drug smuggling is rampant and illegal border crossings are numerous. Also, H.R. 4830, the Border Tunnel Prevention Act, a bill I authored to criminalize the construction of illegal border tunnels entering our country. It should be noted that a similar provision was included in the Senate version of the fiscal year 2007 Homeland Security Appropriations bill.

Mr. Chairman, we must do everything we possibly can to strengthen our borders and stop illegal immigration. I look forward to working with my colleagues on these important issues.